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SELECTED TRANSLATIONS ON RELIGION IN THE USSR

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ISLAM AND ITS REACTIONARY NATURE

- USSR -

[Following is a translation of the pamphlet Islam (Islam),
by D. A. Patrushev, No 34, Series II, 1960, pages 3-30.]

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Preface

Islam or Mohammedanism is one of the most widespread religions in the USSR. Its survivals serve as a hindrance to Communist construction, act to preserve reactionary traditions of the past, introduce anti-scientific notions about nature and society into men's minds, and halt the development of culture and enlightenment among the builders of a new society. This is why the struggle with the survivals of Islam as well as other religions represents an integral part of the Communist education of the workers.

There are various forms of religion in the world. The proponents of each of these think that it is precisely their religion which is the most correct one, which cures all ills, and which assures its followers a secure place in paradise after death. These ideas are most fanatically defended by the Moslem theologians, who represent Islam as the best religion in the world.

What then is Islam and what are its teachings? What is the nature of its ideology and what actual harm is inflicted by Islamic survivals on the task of Communist construction in the USSR? It is largely these questions that will be considered in the present brochure.

What is Islam?

All religions represent perverse and fantastic reflections in the minds of men of those external forces which they encounter in their everyday lives; every religion has its own special characteristics, history, and teaching.

The birthplace of Islam is the Hejaz region with the town of Mecca in the western part of the Arabian peninsula--the earliest commercial and religious center of Araby.

Prior to the advent of Islam, the Arabs believed in various gods personifying natural phenomena and tribal

patriarchal relations.

Toward the end of the sixth and in the early seventh centuries A.D., Araby saw the disintegration of its primitive clan structure and the formation of a class society along with the establishment of the Arabian feudal state.

With the emergence and development of private property and class contradictions, the old religion, i.e., the belief in many tribal gods--polytheism, began to interfere with the interests of the clan rulers, merchant princes, slave traders, and feudal lords. It hindered the political unification of Arabs and the development of national consciousness. It is not by accident that the idea of monotheism, i.e., the belief in a single god, began to make inroads into the Arabic consciousness (under the influence of the Judaic and Christian religions) long before the advent of Islam. Thus, for example, the hanifs ("truth seekers") called upon Arabs to renounce polytheism and to embrace a single god named ar-Rahman (The Compassionate One). According to legend, one of the followers of Hanifiyya was a merchant from Mecca by the name of Mohammed, a member of the Hashimite clan of the Koreish tribe, who in the year 610 emerged on the arena of religious and political activity.

Facts at the disposal of scholars indicate that Islam had been in the process of formation for a long time, long before the advent of Mohammed, but that Mohammed apparently played a considerable role in transforming Islam into a state religion of the Arabs.

During the period of the establishment of the class system among the Arabs, the focal point of their economic, political, and religious conflicts was the region of Mecca and Medina. For a number of years, there was a fierce struggle of a clearly religious character between the Meccans and the followers of Mohammed (who in 622 fled from Mecca to Medina). It was only in 630 that a state of compromise ensued between the warring factions. The Meccans recognized Islam and its founder Mohammed, but won recognition of their city as the center as Islam. From a pantheon of tribal gods, the Kaaba was transformed into a temple of the new religion. The ancient god of the Koreish tribe (one of the most powerful Arabian tribes), Allah, was elevated to the rank of a single, terrible, and omnipotent Islamic god. The followers of Islam assigned to the merchant Mohammed, a religiously ecstatic retiring individual, but at the same time, according to legends, a fierce "destroyer" of infidels, the role of Allah's greatest prophet, ascribing to him a number of supernatural, divine acts. A great number of legends were associated with his name. "If there had been no Mohammed", say the theologians, "the Universe would never have emerged

from a state of unbeing". From the droplets of his sweat, they say, sprang roses. All of this explains why Europeans generally call Islam Mohammedanism.

After gaining ascendancy in Mecca and Medina, Islam quickly spread over all of Arabia. It became the state religion of the Arabian rulers. Officially, the years of the Arabian lunar calendar are numbered from the year 622 in honor of the "Hijra" the emigration of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina and the founding of the first Mohammedan congregation in that town.

The spread of Islam beyond the borders of Arabia is bound up with the external expansion of the Arabian feudal lords. In the seventh and eighth centuries, Arabian conquerors, taking advantage of the weakness of Byzantium and Persia, subjugated the peoples of the Near and Middle East, as well as parts of India, the Transcaucasus, Central Asia, and other territories. Through Turkey, Islam penetrated into the countries of the Balkan Peninsula. This was followed by the formation of a feudal-theocratic state system--the caliphate. The caliphs, considered to be the descendants of Mohammed, held the reins of both secular and religious power and despotically subjugated the exploited masses.

Historical facts show that Islam was inflicted upon the conquered peoples by sword and fire. The laboring masses fiercely resisted the new religion and clung tenaciously to their old gods and ancient traditions (adats). At the same time, the clan rulers, feudal lords, and merchant princes would compromise with the conquerors, finding in the new religion a means of poisoning the minds of workers with a more subtle religious opium and social demagoguery than the old and primitive beliefs. Herein lay one of the secrets of the rapid transformation of Islam into a world-wide religion. Specifically, however, the eastern ritualism of Islam, as was noted by F. Engels, limited its sphere of influence to the East and North Africa.

Thus, Islam arose in Arabia and spread over many countries not by the will of Allah and his chief prophet Mohammed as the Moslem theologians would have it, but rather as a result of certain definite socio-economic relationships entered into by the Arabs and other nations within the Mohammedan sphere of influence over a period lasting more than a thousand years.

* * *

What then was the teaching brought by the new religion to the masses? How, for example, did its theologians explain the surrounding world and the Universe?

The dogmas (the basic precepts of a religion) expressing the nature of Islam and bearing the significance of inviolable law for Moslems are found in the main "sacred" book of Islam, the Koran, in which each word is considered to be an eternal and incontrovertible truth. In it, "all is told clearly and wisely; it is infallible, as was the prophet Mohammed", say the Moslems.

The "sacred character" of the Koran is proved by Moslem theologians with the aid of a clever operation which logicians call a tautology or a "vicious circle": "the Koran is an infallible book. Why is it infallible? Because it was written by Mohammed, and Mohammed was an infallible prophet. Whence do we know that he was an infallible prophet? It says so in the Koran" reason the theologians. Thus, the thesis, the major premise, is supported by an argument which can itself be correct only if the premise itself is true. In reality, both the thesis and argument as to the "sacred character" and infallibility of the Koran are entirely spurious.

The Koran, just as the Bible, has very real, mundane roots. Modern scholarship has proved that its text was compiled over a long period of time by various authors whose thoughts reflected the social contradictions of Arabian society in the seventh and eighth centuries, as well as the primitive, anti-scientific character of the views these men had of nature and social phenomena.

Let us now look into the true nature of the "infallible" teachings of the Koran regarding the origin of the Universe.

According to the Koran, everything was created by Allah. Because of his magical word "Be!" the entire Universe was created out of nothing within a space of six days. At first there were the "heaven and earth"; moreover, this god created not one but "seven heavens (placed) one above the other like domes". "The lowest heaven he decorated with numerous bodies so as to repel demons". Allah did not leave a single track in the heavens, only "stones" to fall from it. One of the hadichs (legends about Mohammed) says the following in reference to the earth: "The earth (is supported by the horn of a bull, the bull--by a fish, the fish--by water, the water--by air, the air--by moisture and all knowledge ends with moisture".

No less crude are the teachings of the Koran about the origin of animals and man. "God made all animals out of water; some of them crawl on their bellies, others walk on two legs, while still others on four legs, since 'God creates according to his own will'". Having created all the animals, Allah 'dispersed' them all over the earth. The Koran is full of contradictions as to the substance of which God created man.

The creation of woman from the rib of the first man Adam was delegated by Allah to the Angel Gabriel, considering this task below his dignity. By this alone, the Koran emphasizes the inferior position of women in society as compared with men. Allah gave to man a mortal physical body and an immortal soul.

The Koran has much to say not only about the creation of the world, but about its end as well; the world will end in a universal earthquake, whereupon Allah will judge men for their sins.

Islam speaks out against man's seeking out of natural and social laws, and against scientific prediction, thereby repressing the might of human reason and following the precept: "The ways of Allah are unknowable". Such is the meagre character of "scientific" thinking in the Koran, borrowed by its compilers from the naive concepts of primitive man about nature and from biblical mythology.

Like other religions, Islam throughout its history has been a fierce enemy of science and enlightenment. Its defenders have always persecuted all that was progressive and of an affirmative character. It is no accident, therefore, that the great thinkers and scholars of the East such as al-Kindi, Ibn ar-Ravendi, Farabi, Biruni, Ibn-Sina, Navoi, Ulugbek, Nizami, Omar Khayyam, and others bravely spoke out against the pernicious ideology of Islam. Basing their arguments on the materialistic traditions of ancient philosophy, they developed concepts of the world and its laws which were scientific for their time. Thus, for example, the ninth century Arabian writer Ibn ar-Ravendi criticized passages in the Koran on the wisdom and omnipotence of God by proving that the Islamic dogmas on nature and human relationships were in reality without foundation.

The outstanding Central Asian scientist, mathematician, physician, and philosopher Farabi (870-950), although admitting the existence of a god as the prime cause of the world, actually defended the materialist outlook. He found the basis of all existence in material bodies in the form of fire, air, water, earth, vapor, flames, minerals, plants, and animals. All of the world's variety represented to him various combinations and interactions of these natural bodies. True knowledge, according to Farabi, should be sought not in Koranic dogma but rather in astronomy and mathematics.

The great thinker from the town of Khorezm, Abu-Reihan al-Biruni (973-1048), based his scientific activity not on dogmas found in the Koran, but rather on "rational imperatives". He never sold out "eternal, unchanging scientific knowledge for the sake of the momentary, ephemeral glitter" offered to

him by the eastern despots. Biruni taught that the basis of the Universe is matter "which takes on the aspect of concreteness and is manifested in particular things". "All actions", wrote Biruni, "belong to the class of material interactions. It is matter itself which binds together and changes the form of things". Not Allah, but "matter" is the creator of the Universe and its laws.

The Moslem clergy was particularly desirous of stamping out the views of nature and man of the world-famous scholar and philosopher from Central Asia, Abu-Ali Ibn-Sina (Avicenna, circa 980-1037), who had exposed the anti-scientific character of Islamic dogmas. The world, Avicenna taught, was created not by God but arose through a natural historic process as a result of necessity; according to him, the existence of the Universe is eternal. God plays no part in nature. The great thinker had an immense faith in human reason and in man's ability to come to know the objective laws of nature; he spoke out resolutely against religious involvement.

Omar Khayyam (circa 1040-1123), the famous Iranian poet and thinker, also commented acidly on Allah's wisdom in creating the world. He wrote:

Creating life, you then created death.
Condemning all your creatures to this fate.
If badly you did mold them, who's to blame?
But if they are well made, why choose you to destroy
them once again?

At the present time, Moslem theologians are obliged to engage in various forms of sophistry in order to "tie in" the Koran with the facts about nature and man revealed by modern science. Attempts are being made to reconcile the irreconcilable--Islam and science, to establish a "bond of friendship" between the two by employing the experience of Catholicism in adjusting science to fit religious concepts. In essence, the attempt to reconcile faith and reason boils down in the first place to the assertion that God, having created man, endowed him with a bit of "his own" reason. It is with the aid of this faculty that man is able to make scientific discoveries in coming to know the divinely created world. However, God limits the sphere of man's knowledge. Thus, the Soviet artificial earth satellites supposedly do not reach the first, i.e., the "lowest" heaven and will never reach that heaven which is the seat of Allah. In the second place, while admitting of the possibility of scientific truth, the theologians consider this to be ephemeral, relative, and temporal, just as everything else on earth, while the truths

found in the "sacred writ" are accounted as eternal, absolute, and "beyond full cognition". The truth of science must only serve as an aid in the discovery of the divine truths contained in the Koran. Thirdly, and this is most important, the actual text of the Koran is being interpreted ever more subtly. The statements made in the "holy writ" about the Universe and man are supposedly not to be understood literally, but rather allegorically. Thus, for example, the six days in which Allah "created" the world should be regarded as six historical epochs, etc. Finally, Islam, just as other religions has always taken advantage and will continue to take advantage of the difficulties of science. Everything that still remains unknown to scientists is deemed to be eternally beyond human ken since it lies within the sphere of divine providence.

But no matter how the modern theologians squirm in this regard, religion still remains the most fierce enemy of science in our time. The servants of the cult actually hold on to their old positions and make "concessions" to science only because they fear to lose contact with the believers who are to an ever greater extent becoming convinced of the groundlessness of religious fairytales about the world. Even when praising science, they take every opportunity to denigrate discoveries in the eyes of believers. Thus, for example, during the Ashkhabad earthquake of 1947, the mullahs spread a rumor to the effect that the earthquake took place because Allah was angry with the believers for neglecting their religion, and so made the bull one of whose horns supports the earth to shift the world to his other horn.

The propagation of anti-scientific concepts about nature and man by Islam has always been useful and advantageous to the exploiting classes, who have always understood full well that the lower the cultural level of workers, the more ignorant and superstitious they are, the easier it is to keep them in a state of abject slavery. Thus, prior to the October Socialist Revolution, the laboring Moslem masses of Russia had been condemned to a life of dark ignorance and lack of culture. Many peoples did not even have their own system of writing. For each one thousand persons, for example, in Uzbekistan, there were only about 20 literate individuals. The corresponding figures for Turkmenistan and Eastern Bukhara were 7 and 5 persons, respectively. The "fruits of learning" were reaped by the representatives of the feudal nobility and children of the clergy. What sort of an education was given them? The pupils in the mektebe (elementary school) for example, were occupied solely with the memorization of ayats (verses) and even whole suras (chapters) of the Koran. The heads of students studying at

the Madrasas (advanced religious schools) were stuffed for a period of 10-15 years with Islamic scholasticism; the graduates usually became theologians equipped with only the most elementary knowledge of secular subjects. "The mullahs", writes Professor L. Klimovich, "set up as their example to believers the famous eighth century Moslem fanatic Abu-Hanifa, the founder of the largest Islamic theological legal academy (madhhab), who during one single month of Ramadan is supposed to have read the entire Koran 61 times in a row" [see note/ (the Koran consists of 114 chapters). /Note: L. Klimovich, The Holidays and Fasts of Islam, page 25, Moscow, 1941.]

The class nature of the Islamic ideology is directly expressed in the social dogmas and principles of the Moslems. What do these represent and whom do they serve?

Whom Does Islam Serve?

Prior to the advent of Islam, the life of the Bedouin tribes who inhabited the Arabian peninsula, just as the lives of all men, were regulated by the so-called common-law (adat), which was passed on from generation to generation. With the spread of Islam, the life of the Moslems became subject to the regulation of the Koran and the code of religious and legal norms (shariat) which sprang from it in addition to the adat.

Throughout the length of the Koran, the Moslems are admonished to believe in the single, omnipotent god, Allah, and his chief prophet, Mohammed, to obey them implicitly, and to believe in divine predestination.

For a period of 13 centuries throughout the Mohammedan world, five times each day the muezzins have been calling from their minarets to remind Moslems of the most important Islamic dogma: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet". Under pain of death, believers are directed to completely renounce polytheism. "There is no God but the One God", teaches the Koran. Intolerance is a common characteristic of all religious ideology. But in Islam, intolerance reaches its utmost limits. All those who do not believe in the one god Allah and his prophet are proclaimed to be deadly enemies upon whom one must make merciless, "holy" war ("gazavat" or "jihad"). "The Koran and the Moslem legal code which springs from it", wrote Karl Marx, "reduce the geography and ethnography of various peoples to the simple and convenient formula of dividing them into two countries and two nations: the true believers and the infidels. The infidel is a "harbi", an enemy. Islam places unbelievers outside the law and creates a state of unceasing hostility between Mohammedans and infidels" [see note/. On the other

hand, there must be no conflicts or wars between true believers. /Note: K. Marx and F. Engels, Works, Volume 10, page 167, second edition./

The social and class significance of dividing all people into believers (Moslems) and unbelievers consists in using the banner of religious unity to distract the Mohammedan masses from the class struggle and the fight for a better life on earth. On the other hand, religious intolerance was at that time the ideological justification for the struggle waged by the Arabs for national consciousness as opposed to tribal feuds. Is there really any need for adducing arguments to show that there has never been, is not, and will never be anything in common between the religious intolerance and bloody chauvinism of Islam and the Marxist-Leninist teaching about freedom of conscience, friendship among great and small peoples, national sovereignty, the principle of internationalism, and the exclusion of war from the life of society!

It is from this demand for faith in one god that there flows the Koranic dogma about the absolute subordination of righteous men to Allah, his prophet, and their appointees here on earth. The word "Islam" itself means subordination. "True piety before God is subordination", says the Koran. The class significance of this teaching is quite clear: resign yourself to God and his ministers--the men of power and servants of the cult.

According to the Koran, the existence of private property, property and class inequality, exploitation, and slavery of divine origin are sanctioned by God himself: "Do not cast your eyes on those good things with which we have endowed certain families". The poor man's destiny is to be a submissive slave: "Be patient in any adversity which may overtake you, for it is an inescapable part of your life", reads the Koran.

The idea of complete predestination (fatalism) is connected with the teaching about Allah's omnipotence and autocracy and the absolute submission of men to his will. Karl Marx considered fatalism to be the keystone of Mohammedanism. "Everyone is in God's power", teaches Islam. "Not even a leaf will fall from a tree without his knowledge". Nor do men have free choice. People are mere puppets in the hands of the Almighty. They can "wish only that which is desired by God, the master of the world".

The reactionary significance of this denial of man's will has to do with the fact that it condemns the workers to passivity, hinders the formation of their class consciousness, and sows the seeds of uncertainty in one's own powers. Fatalism is completely foreign to the spirit of Marxism-

Leninism. In coming to know the laws of nature and society, man gains insight into them and becomes their master instead of a slave. The ideas of Communism increase the might of man's reason, and inspire his will through bold plans for the reconstruction of life on a truly rational foundation. Thus, for example, with today's balance of power on the international arena, there is no fatalistic necessity for a new world war.

What is the ideal which Islam places before man? Just as other religions, Islam considers the life of man on earth to be a temporary and transitory phenomenon--a mirage or illusion. "Know ye that life on this earth is naught but a deceptive folly, a temptation, a vain masquerade, vain-glory among men, a desire to stand out by virtue of much property and many children", says the Koran. The truly happy life, according to Islamic teaching, ensues after death.

For centuries, the working people had been deprived of earthly benefits. For their sorrows on earth and their submission to their masters and god, the new religion promised them the greatest benefits after death, in Paradise. This explains the colorful and exotic descriptions of life in Paradise found in the Koran. The inhabitants of the arid deserts with their endless sands and fierce storms knew full well the value of water, coolness, shady gardens, fruits, and other benefits of the southern climate. It is this contrast between life on earth with its many deprivations and sorrows on the one hand and the promised paradise on the other that Islam exploits.

Here, for example, is a description of Paradise: "Golden trays and goblets will be carried among ye; there will be all that the heart may desire and wherewith the eyes are satiated". "There will be rivers of water which have never known stagnation; rivers of milk whose taste is unchanging; rivers of wine pleasant to the drinker; rivers of pure honey".

But what is it that awaits the infidels and believers in many gods after death? Just as Christianity, Islam consigns them to a fiery hell. The Koran describes the tortures of hell. Allah assumes the role of a cruel eastern despot over all the "unclean ones", all of the unbelievers, preparing for them the most subtle tortures in order to evoke suffering which exceed all of the torments of earthly life. Nothing can save the unbelievers from the terrible punishment of Allah. "If anyone who has become an infidel and dies an unbeliever should offer all the gold which fills the earth as his ransom, it will not be accepted. They shall suffer terrible torment".

Detailed descriptions of the pleasures of Paradise and the torments of hell were needed to assure the spread of Islam among the masses through the promise of illusory happiness in Paradise in order to distract the workers from class solidarity in the struggle for real happiness on earth, as well as to hold the believers in eternal fear.

According to Islam, Paradise will be open only to those who "believe in the one God Allah and his prophet Mohammed" (shahada) and piously fulfil the following minimum requirements of Islam: praying five times daily (namaz), regular giving of alms (zakah), strict compliance with the 30-day fast (uraza) during the month of Ramadan, and the making of at least one pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) during one's lifetime. These are the "sacred" duties of every believer which hang over him like a nightmare from early youth to the grave and prevent him from struggling for a life befitting a human being.

It is not easy for a simple, Moslem worker to answer for himself the following important question: Just who is it that benefits from the social principles and ideology which are so "wisely" presented in the "infallible" Koran and the strict laws of shariat?

The history of Islam has provided the answer to this question. The names of Allah and Mohammed have been used to justify the yoke imposed by the clan aristocracies and the selfish interests of the merchant class. Islam and its proponents faithfully serve both the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie. It was under the green banner of "Jihad" that the Arabian, Mongolian, Tatar, Turkish, and other invaders undertook their bandit expeditions. Prior to the October Revolution, Islam was a staunch ally of the colonial policies of Russian imperialism. After the Great October, which liberated the enslaved Moslem masses from the chains of colonial slavery, Islam bestowed its blessing on all of the intrigues undertaken by internal counter-revolutionaries, basmatch bands /counter-revolutionary robber bands in Central Asia during the Civil War in Russia/, and foreign interventionists on Soviet territory; all this was done in the name of Allah.

What a sorry dole, for example, was meted out to the Kazakh people by the laws of Allah and the earthly princes! This found clear expression in the words of the famous folk bard of Kazakhstan, Dzhambul:

Many laws did I know in my life,
My back is bent from these laws,
These laws have made my tears to flow.
These laws have cut deep furrows in my brow.

The laws of Allah, the laws of Ablay [see note].
The laws of bloody Nikolay.
Children were taken away by these laws.
People were killed in the name of these laws.
And our girls were sold like cattle.

By these laws were villages decimated.
By these laws did the lords grow fat
Clinging tenaciously to the backs of the people.
By these laws did lawlessness, hunger, and death
Stalk the land as a sandstorm.

[Note: One of the Kazakh khans.]

Such was the lot of other peoples of the Mohammedan world. Such was the spiritual past of Islam.

But what is the situation in our own day?

The social dogmas of Islam are cleverly exploited by modern imperialists as well. Playing the role of "friends of Islam", the colonizers have created various Moslem religions and quasi-religious organizations, and have taken to publishing literature of Islamic orientation. Sensing the inevitability of the lessening of religious influences, the theologians are attempting to adjust Islamic dogmas to the spirit of the times. Revising the Koran and shariat, they are attempting to preserve their content. Essentially, this modernization consists in imparting an imperialist cast to the feudal form of Islam. Thus, for example, Allah is depicted not in the form of an anthropomorphic (i.e., man-like) god endowed by early Islam with such human faculties as sight, hearing, speaking, etc., and not in the form of an eastern despot, but rather as some abstract, recondite entity which determines the destiny of the world. Religious ceremonies no longer have to be performed in mosques. Allah can now be addressed in the fields, in the cemetery, and other places. Mosques are now being electrically lighted. The muezzins are being replaced with public address systems. Women are allowed to be present together with men in the nave of a mosque. The earlier proscription of representational art depicting humans, nature, etc., has been rescinded.

The proponents of Islam are attempting to change those teachings of the Koran which are in blatant contradiction to modern life. Thus, for example, the Islamic and Turkish

scholar G. Eschke, the editor of the magazine The World of Islam published in Leyden, writes: If the theological faculty at Ankara on the basis of source studies would open the door to historical criticism, this would be a great boon to Islam and Turkey could return once again to the codified shariat. Moreover, neither the United Nations Charter nor the Declaration of the Rights of Man contradicts the spirit of the Koran" /see note/. /Note: see the collection of articles entitled Science and Religion, page 332, Moscow, 1957./

Also of some significance is the fact that along with the modernization of Islam, there is in some countries an apparent recrudescence of its feudal forms. Thus, for example, in Turkey, where the most radical reform of the religion was carried out under Kemal Ataturk, religious fanaticism has been intensified within the last few years.

One of Turkey's religious fanatics, 93-year old Siad Nursi, the head of the Moslem sect "Nurji", even demanded in his tour of the country in 1960 that Turkey restore the caliphate which it threw on the scrapheap of history in 1924.

The Menderes government, for example, intensified the training of Moslem theologians. In its issue of 11 November, 1959, the newspaper Eni guyn had this to say on the matter: "There is in evidence in Turkey today a dangerous tendency toward the renaissance of religious schools--the madrasas. This phenomenon presents a danger to the future of the country" /see note/. /Note: in the magazine Sovremennyy Bostok (The Modern East), No 3, 1960, page 58./

The modern reactionary bourgeoisie, just as it has in the past, is attempting to create hostility between believers in order to distract them from the struggle for peace, democracy, and socialism.

There are numerous facts which demonstrate how present-day American, British, and other colonizers, while hypocritically praising Islam, are inflaming religious passions among the people of the East. Thus, for example, guided by the principle "divide and conquer", the British imperialists in their 1947 division of India into the Indian Union and Pakistan, incited pogroms and bloody clashes which resulted in the killing and maiming of hundreds and thousands of people and the deprivation of millions of their native land, homes, and property. "The division of India into two parts", N.S. Khrushchev has said, "was not carried out in the interests of the peoples of India. But it was precisely for this purpose that passions were aroused about the religious question in India, although the problems of religion had never played any major role in the creation of this or that state" /see note/. /Note: Pravda (Truth), 11 December

1955.7

In our own day, the imperialists of the U.S., Britain, France, Holland, and other countries are inciting religious fanaticism among Moslems in Southeast Asia, the countries of the Near and Middle East, and in Northern Africa; they are marshaling the forces of reaction against peoples engaged in the struggle for their national independence. Moslem workers and politically progressive Mohammedans are beginning to understand with ever greater clarity that the "love for Islam" and the incitement of religious psychoses are being used by imperialists for their heinous plots against the forces of peace, democracy, and socialism.

Communists, on the other hand, guided by the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, have never stated the religious question in separate form, i.e., as apart from the concrete tasks of the proletarian class struggle at a given stage of revolution and socialist construction. In this regard, V.I. Lenin wrote: "Although we shall always preach the scientific world view, and although it is absolutely necessary for us to struggle against the inconsistency of the 'Christians' and their ilk, this does not in any way imply that we must accord a place of primary importance to the religious question (since it does not deserve such a place), or that we should permit the fragmentation of the forces of the truly revolutionary, economic, and political struggle for the sake of third-rate opinions and fantasies which will quickly lose any political significance and are rapidly cast off on to the scrapheap by the course of economic development itself" [see note/.

[Note: V.I. Lenin, On Religion, page 9, Gospolitizdat, 1955.]

The most burning question presently confronting the world is that of the struggle of peoples in all countries for disarmament, the prevention of a third world war, and the exclusion of war in general as an instrument of policy. In this truly sacred struggle, the atheists stand side by side both with rank and file believers and the more farsighted proponents of all religions, including Islam. These men know full well that atomic bombs will not spare Christians, Moslems, Jews, or Buddhists. Thus, many Moslems, by diverging from Islamic dogmas are beginning to comprehend the everyday truth that things may be all right with Allah, but that men still need to live on earth. No one really wants to die even with the hope of going to Paradise.

To the attempts of the ideologists of imperialism to incite religious psychoses, we say the following: Whether one believes in God or not is a matter of one's own conscience. But we are against those who exploit men's consciences in the interests of reactionary and superstitious ignorance.

* * *

And so, Islam has always served, and beyond the boundaries of the socialist countries still continues to serve, the exploiting classes and the forces of reaction. Such is the instructive lesson of history.

At the same time, history shows that the pernicious Islamic ideology has always placed a particularly heavy burden on the shoulders of the long-suffering Moslem woman in all countries of the Mohammedan world. The problem of the actual liberation of women from the yoke of Islam is one of the most acute issues of our day.

What precisely is the nature of the "feminine problem" in Islam? What does Islam mean to the Moslem woman?

The Lot of a Moslem Woman

It is a well-known fact that all religions have to some extent repressed and continue to repress the human and social dignity of women. The orthodox Jew begins his morning prayer with the words: "I thank thee, O Lord, that thou didst not make me a woman".

The Russian poet N.A. Nekrasov wrote unforgetably of the sorry life of the Russian woman in the past:

To suffer three burdensome lots was her fate,
The first of these was to marry a slave,
The second to mother the child of a slave,
The third to grovel and scrape til the grave.
And all of these burdens of pain and despair
The women of Russia did bear.

The Moslem woman was forced to Islam to endure an even more severe burden.

In the Koran and shariat, the subjugation of women was supplemented with a specifically eastern brand of despotism. Under the pretense of preserving the physical and moral purity and virtue of women, they were condemned to eternal and hopeless economic, political, and spiritual slavery; they were looked upon as the private property of the man who was considered above her "in his degree of dignity". This idea as set forth in the Koran guided the family and marital relations of Moslems down to the finest detail.

From early childhood, women were made an object of commercial barter. They could be bought, sold, given away, etc.

The Koran sanctions polygamy. The class significance of polygamy is obvious: the buying and selling of wives was the prerogative of khans, lords, merchants, and other exploiters.

Moslem regulation of female conduct in everyday life, within the family circle, as well as in society represented the repression of women carried to the extreme. For example, this is what the Koran has to say on the external appearance of women: "Tell ye to such believing women that they should cast down their eyes...that they should display only their external garments, covering their breasts with coverlets; they should show off their finery only to their husbands, fathers, the fathers of their fathers, their sons, the sons of their husbands, and their brothers..."

The untold physical and moral suffering of eastern women has been and continues to be sanctioned by Islam in the name of Allah. The Moslem clergy is doing all in its power to prove that Islam allegedly expresses paternal concern for family ties and conjugal relations; but what then is the true meaning of the passages on the subject found in the Koran? This meaning boils down to the satisfaction of the zoological instincts of wealthy and jealous slaveholders.

The Koran teaches: "If one of your wives has done a bad thing, submit ye the testimony of four witnesses thereto; if the witnesses provide the needed testimony, you may keep that wife locked up in your house until death overtakes her".

Both the Koran and shariat strictly prohibit inter-marriage with unbelievers, polytheists, and infidels. An unbelieving woman can only be kept in the status of a concubine. "Do not marry women who believe in many gods until they themselves come to believe. A believing slave is better than a woman who believes in many gods, although the latter may be more pleasing to them..."

All of the torments inflicted on women were to be endured with a special sort of fatalistic submissiveness, for such was the will of Allah. "He does as he wills".

Even in dividing a legacy, the portion of the daughter is twice as small as that of the son. How many tragedies have been suffered by the women of the East because of the teachings of the Koran!

Paraphrasing the words of Fourier, it might be said that the degree of emancipation of women from the Islamic religion provides an indication of their liberation from centuries-old physical, material, legal, and spiritual slavery. It is not in vain that Islam is called a "male religion". The attempts of certain bourgeois eastern scholars to depict this religion as a repository of female honor cannot stand up against any criticism whatsoever.

The debased and slave-like position of women vis-a-vis men as sanctified by the Koran and legally codified by the shariat is apparent in every aspect of life. In Turkmeniya, for example, the abasement of women began with

the naming of the girl child. Even today, one can encounter along with such poetic names as Gazel' (beauty), other names, such as "Ogul'-cherek" (I wanted a son), "Bestir" ("We have had enough"), etc.

To the mother, the birth of a female child was a real tragedy, since it meant condemnation by Allah, and what is more important, brought on additional humiliation from the husband and his relatives. The neighbors would say: "They have given birth to a little girl slave", "They now have a little chattel slave", etc. A woman who gave birth only to girls considered herself guilty before her husband and often suggested that he obtain a new and "happier" wife.

The birth of a son was an event of supreme joy--a display of Allah's mercy. The boy was usually given some extremely impressive name in honor of some prophet or religious rite. Boys received such names as Mohammed, Oraz (in honor of the Uraza fast), Sapar--one born in the month of Sapar; among the Shiistic Moslems common names would be Ali, Hussein, Hassan, etc.

From early childhood, a son was placed in a privileged position vis-a-vis his sisters. From boyhood, he was taught to consider himself master in the house. If his parents were to die, he would have the right to sell or exchange his sisters, to deprive them of a share of the water supply, land, etc.

Girls, on the other hand, were taught to display slavish submissiveness toward fathers, brothers, future husbands, and mothers-in-law. Once married, the woman was not permitted to raise her voice to her husband or to speak to any other man; she was required to do her husband's bidding in all matters, to satisfy all of his whims, not to condemn acts of adultery on his part, etc. In a word, the woman had to be a slave, an object belonging solely to the husband.

As a result of the ancient prevalence of clan relations and the influence of common-law, the forms of female slavery among the Moslems are extremely varied. They are determined by the degree of historical development of a given tribe or people, as well as its customs and mores. This explains, for example, the various ways of covering up the face. Whereas the Uzbek women completely covered their face with a chachvan and parandja, completely transforming themselves into faceless shadows, the Akhaltekin women, for example would simply cover their mouth with a yashmak (bandana). This meant that even their breath was not to come in contact with a man. The Tekin women of the Mary Rayon place a corner of their bandana between their teeth in the presence of a man, etc.

And how many other humiliations did the Turkmen women have to bear from the cradle to the grave! Her organism would barely begin to get strong when the parents already started worrying about getting a sufficient price for her as a bride. Marriage usually came at the age of 12 to 14 years. The girl was never asked her opinion of the prospective husband, since "how could the poor girl have any desires of her own". During the first years of married life, the wife was not permitted to address her husband and other men by name, but had to start out by saying "father of so-and-so". Even in announcing some important event upon entering the tent, she was required to cast down her eyes in speaking. She did not have any right of divorce. In meeting a man, the woman had to respectfully step to one side to make way for him. In walking with her husband, the woman was required to walk neither ahead nor alongside him, but rather behind. Even after her husband's death, his wife was not permitted to lie on one level with him--her grave had to be dug deeper. Thus was the sorry lot of Moslem women over many centuries.

"The Soviet power" wrote V.I. Lenin, "was the first and only force in the world to destroy all of the old, bourgeois, and evil laws which placed women in an inferior position to men and endowed men with various privileges such as those in the field of marital law or relations with children" /see note/ [Note: V.I. Lenin, Works, Volume 30, page 346.]

It was not until the advent of the Soviet power that women received the keys to their own happiness, having been accorded not only a legal but also an actual position of equality with men. Along with men, and as equals among equals, women are now actively participating in all spheres of Soviet economic, political, and cultural life.

With the liquidation of the exploiting classes and the victory of socialism in the USSR, religion is no longer a form of social consciousness. Religious prejudices and the superstitions of all religion, including Mohammedanism, are the survivals of an obsolete ideology destined to disappear completely in the course of our national life. In order to effect this disappearance, however, we have to wage a systematic struggle against religious survivals. In what light should we view this struggle?

Why We Are Combatting Islamic Survivals

Modern bourgeois statesmen and reactionary Moslem theologians are attempting to inflict upon the peoples of the Islamic world the nonsensical idea that Communists are

the enemies of believers in general and Moslems in particular. The purpose of this slander is quite clear--it is intended to defame Communism in the face of the eastern peoples who are struggling for their independence. Hypocritically playing the role of "friends" of Islam they are attempting to cast a shadow on Communist attitudes toward Moslems in the USSR both past and present. The situation is presented in such a way as to make people think that true Moslems in the USSR are persecuted, subject to repression, etc. In actual fact, Communists have never struggled and are not now struggling against believers simply because the latter believe in God and observe religious holidays and rites.

The Soviet power has been exposing individual servants of the cult and trying them, not because of their position as spiritual shepherds to believers, but rather for their anti-governmental activities wherein they used the names of Christ or Mohammed to bless the counter-revolution which attempted to restore the old exploitative order in Russia.

Now, when the Soviet people has embarked upon the path of gradual transition from socialism to Communism, and when Communism is becoming a concrete reality rather than just a dream, one of the main tasks in the ideological field, as formulated by N.S. Khrushchev at the 21st Congress of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) is "the intensification of ideological-educational efforts by the Party, the improvement of Communist consciousness among the workers, and first and foremost of the younger generation, their education in the spirit of Communist attitudes toward labor, Soviet patriotism, and internationalism, as well as the elimination of capitalist survivals in the consciousness of people and the struggle against bourgeois ideology" [see note].
[Note: Materials of the Extraordinary Congress of the CPSU, page 12, Gospolitizdat, 1959.]

The struggle against religious survivals, including those of Islam, is an inseparable part of the Communist education of the workers. We are conducting this struggle through all of the methods of mass political and cultural-educational work among the population, using the techniques of education and explanation to believers on the error of their ways. The servants of the cult, however, are not dreaming and are taking all measures in order to hinder the conversion of believers from religion to atheism. Thus, for example, the Moslem clergy, having declared their loyal attitude toward the Soviet power, are attempting to modernize Islamic dogmas with special reference to Communist ideas and the realities of Soviet life. Along what channels is this modernization proceeding?

First of all, along the path of praising and idealizing the reform activities of Mohammed and the corresponding interpretation of dogmas in the Koran, it should be noted that attempts to idealize early Islam are not new.

Already in the first years of the Soviet regime, some workers even within the Soviet and Party apparatus of Central Asia erroneously attempted to unite the Koran and Das Kapital of Marx, Communism and Islam. Such attempts were made, for example, at the First Communist Party Congress in Turkestan, held in June, 1918, in the city of Tashkent.

This Congress took up the question of how Communists should approach the Moslem masses. The delegates pointed out that although the consciousness of the Moslem workers was gradually awakening under the influence of the socialist revolution, they were still poorly informed on the programs of various political parties and current events. Their sympathies in favor of the Communist Party platform were instinctive. How was the Moslem question to be solved under these conditions? One of the speakers suggested the use of the Koran and all of the teachings of the prophet Mohammed, since, as he sought to convince the delegates, Mohammed was a Communist and thought along socialist lines. The Turkestan Communist Party Congress rejected and condemned these recommendations as anti-Marxist and useful to the Mohammedan clergy in influencing the masses in their own interests.

The adaptation of Islamic dogmas to Soviet reality is also proceeding along moral, marital, and social lines. The Moslem clergy is attempting to disguise the misanthropic and individualistic Islamic morality into a set of Communistic precepts by asserting that Mohammed himself had been a Communist and introduced the world to a new, eternal, and universal code of morality.

Finally, the Islamic religious holidays and ceremonies are given a purely national cast. Exploiting the deep-seated nationalistic sentiments of the believers, the Moslem clergy is attempting to conserve in the guise of national tradition the pernicious Islamic ideology. However, while speaking out, for example, against such practices as polygamy, wife buying, isolation of women, the wearing of the parandja and chachvan or the yashmak and boryk, and favoring equality among men and women, the present-day clergy is actually attempting to bestow its blessing on all of the obsolete marital and social institutions. It should be borne in mind that any innovations introduced into Islamic dogma represent a mere tactical move calculated to retain believers in the cobweb of religion.

The loyalty of the Moslem clergy toward the Soviet regime is combined with the propagation of the reactionary

Islamic ideology and the desire to preserve in essence all of the Islamic dogmas and rites.

Despite all of the attempts on the part of the servants of the cult to prevent the complete disintegration of their religious ideology, believers of all faiths are to an ever greater extent becoming convinced of the great truth that the achievement of a truly idyllic life on earth depends not on Allah or other gods, but rather on their own creative endeavors and successes in education, technology, and science.

Thus, for example, whereas prior to the October Socialist Revolution the Turkmen people were constantly obliged to endure poverty, hunger, disease, and complete illiteracy, the years of the Soviet regime in the Republic have brought with them the establishment of new, well-planned cities and industrial settlements along with a complete transformation of the Turkmen village. An extensive network of schools, cultural-educational institutions, higher and specialized secondary schools, and academy of sciences, their own national writers, composers, and artists, as well as a continuing improvement in public health, commerce, and communications are today the salient characteristics of the life and culture of the Turkmen people.

The fact that believers are forsaking religion is completely incontrovertible. Life itself shows that not only ordinary Moslems, but also individual representatives of the Moslem clergy and those of other religions are abandoning Islam and taking up an atheistic viewpoint, once convinced of the correctness of the scientific world outlook. Thus, for example, the leading theologian and priest Kadir Rasulev, a figure well-known among the Moslems of Astrakhan', has cut all ties with Islam. In his renunciation of religion entitled I Do Not Want to be a Mullah, he clearly reveals the anti-scientific and reactionary nature of Islamic dogmas. Analyzing the almost 70-year course of his past life, he came to the following significant and timely conclusion.

"I was wrong to devote a greater part of my life to the defense of the Islamic religion. But as the years went by, I discovered the groundlessness and error of that which I believed formerly, and understood that science possesses great power. The Islamic religion says: Private property is sacred; the world shall never know equality. But the Soviet people have completely eliminated private property and are creating untold riches by their labors. Long did I wander in darkness trying to find truth. And I did find it. Above all, I was aided in my decision by the achievements of science and the great feats of the people. I became firmly convinced that the religion of Islam, just as any other

religion, does nothing but harm in hindering us in our daily lives and holding back progress" /see note/. /Note: the magazine Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No 3, 1959, page 35./

And here is the confession of another old leader of Islam, the son and grandson of well-known Ishans, Pir Niyaz Hodzha from the town of Khorezm. For sixty years, this man not only professed faith in Islam, but devoted long years to the study of theology and the active inculcation of Islamic dogmas in the minds of men, having become famous as a "saint" among the believers who was able to work "miracles" and was a twenty-second generation descendent of Mohammed. What led this venerable theologian to atheism? "The fact of the matter is that the more I perfected my knowledge of Islam", he writes in an article entitled 'So Was My Faith Dimmed', "the greater doubt that arose in my soul". From doubts in the truth of Islamic dogmas, he passed on to his renunciation of religion. The decisive moment in this renunciation was occasioned by his awareness of the actual practice of Communist construction: "Life around me was changing day by day and hour by hour. The Koran, of course, gave no explanation for what was taking place in my native town of Khorezm". /See note/. /Note: The magazine Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No 5, 1960, page 44./

A former mullah and now a worker in the town of Chardzhou by the name of I. Mukhamedzhanov, who has now broken with Islam, warns young people against becoming entrapped in religious cobwebs: "I say to our young people: he who lets himself become intoxicated by religion does great harm, above all to himself. Keep a clear head; do not let yourself be duped by religious superstition!" /see note/. /Note: The magazine Kommunist Turkmenistan (The Turkmenistan Communist), No 2, 1959, page 58./

One of the clearest indications of the failure of Islamic ideology in the USSR is the actual liberation of Moslem women from their centuries-old spiritual enslavement. The Uzbek, Turkmen, Tatar, Tadzhik, Azerbaydzhan, and Ossetian women, along with those of many other peoples, are making their creatively inspired contribution to all spheres of economic, cultural, socio-political, governmental, and Party activity, building a truly happy, communistic life on earth and rejecting the religious traditions of the past, Islamic fairytales about a life after death in Paradise, etc. Thus, for example, whereas prior to the October Revolution there were almost no literate women at all in Uzbekistan, at the present time 80 thousand women have a secondary and specialized secondary education, over 54 thousand are studying in higher educational institutions and technical schools, and

over 68 thousand are working in the public education agencies; 40% of the Republic's artistic workers are women. The names of such actresses as Sara Ishanturayeva, Khalima Nasyrova, Tamara Khanum, Mukarram Turgunbayeva, and Galiya Izmaylova, are known far beyond the borders of Uzbekistan.

Could any Uzbek woman of the past, wrapped in her parandja, even dream that her compatriot Zul'fiya Umidova would be a Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences as well as a professor at the Tashkent Medical Institute, while Khadicha Suleymanova would become an Academician of the Uzbek SSR Academy of Sciences, and that the President of this Republic would be Yadgar Nasriddinova!

A telling blow at the Koran and shariat are the successes of public education in the previously backward republics with a Moslem population. This was pointed out convincingly in the speech made at the sixth Republican Teachers' Congress of Turkmenistan by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan B. Ovezov: "From a dark, repressed, and illiterate country, Turkmenistan has become a country fully literate where education in the schools is conducted in the native language". With respect to public education, the Turkmen SSR has surpassed a number of highly-developed European nations, not to speak of the countries of the foreign East. For every 10 thousand population, there are 83 students, more than twice the number in France, five times more than in Turkey, and 10 times more than in Iran. Just in 1960, 435 teachers and workers in public education were awarded Soviet orders and medals; in that same year, 224 teachers were awarded the Honorary Scroll of the Presidium of the Turkmen SSR Supreme Soviet, while 26 teachers received the honor title of "Senior Teacher of the Turkmen SSR". "Relentlessly overcoming difficulties and battling against the survivals of the past, the religious narcosis along with the savage laws of adat and shariat which prohibited the schooling of girls, the teachers of our Republic under the leadership of the Communist Party have trained and educated generations of people who are now taking an active part along with all other peoples in our country in the construction of the first socialist state in the world and the present struggle to attain Communism", so spoke V. Ovezov [see note]. [Note: the newspaper Turkmenskaya Iskra (the Turkmenistan Spark), 18 August, 1960.]

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It would be a grave error and a deviation from the Party line on the religious question, however, to underestimate the pernicious influence of religion on the minds of men in general and not to recognize the conspirative role of religious survivals in our country in particular.

The vitality of Islamic survivals is made manifest in various forms and inflicts a great deal of harm not only to the believers themselves but to society as a whole. The reactionary traditions of the past frequently still have a telling effect on the minds of the living; sometimes, they cruelly avenge their rejection.

The servants of the cult are using all their strength and every means to preserve and rejuvenate religious traditions; to do this, they are trying to represent all truly popular, national traditions of the past as stemming from religion.

This fact was well stated by the famous Turkmen writer V. Kerbabayev in his speech at the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan. "Many behave in everyday life as did their grandfathers and great-grandfathers. You ask them why. They reply: because that is the custom. They pay a ransom (kalym) for brides and again call it "custom". This is absolute nonsense! We do have good customs; there is a Turkmen folk tradition--respect for elders, hospitality. Who will say one word against these traditions? But that which I just mentioned are not customs but the birthmarks of evil old traditions and extremely persistent survivals!"

In what forms, then, are Islamic survivals manifested and why are they evil?

Religious traditions cling with particular tenacity in the relations of everyday life and marriage. The Moslem clergy see in them the last and main anchor of religiosity among the masses.

Many facts serve to prove that the most widespread and deeply ingrained survival of the past is the feudal attitude toward the woman, which is connected with the vitality of the reactionary traditions of the adat and shariat.

The programs of Party Komsomol, and other organizations, are still concerned with the question of combatting the kalym and polygamy, both of which are prohibited by Soviet law as two of the more pernicious traditions of the past. However, these two customs are still observed either in concealed or open form.

Thus, the former director of seven-year school number 16 of the Chardzhouskiy Rayon R. Murzayev systematically tormented his wife for such things as conversing with men at the motion picture theater.

The newspaper Maryvskaya Pravda (The Maryy Truth) brought to light the following facts: a teacher at shhool number 28 of the "Bol'shevik" state farm by the name of Gul'mamedov, "having decided to marry off his brother, transported a 14-year-old girl pupil from one of the schools in a Kuybyshevskiy Rayon kolkhoz to the town of Iolotan". Meredov a teacher at secondary school number 23 of the Tedzhenskiy Rayon, having married a girl under the legal age, paid a kalym of 7500 rubles in cash along with 19 oriental robes and 4 sheep. (The institution of kalym is frequently spoken of as a payment for "the mother's milk").

The wives of teachers at the Secondary School imeni Gor'kiy of the Naukatanskiy Rayon of Kirgiziya tashmamatov and Abzhatarov still continue to wear the tarandja.

The feudal and disdainful attitude toward women is likewise frequently manifested in the fact that some men, shamefully, consider it below their dignity to appear with their wives at the cinema, theater, or public places. This matter was seriously discussed at the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan and the 4th Congress of Teachers in Tadzhikistan.

At the teacher conferences which took place this year in Central Asia, troubled voices spoke out on the fact that a great number of girls were still being withdrawn from school prior to graduation.

Of the numerous religious rites, particularly tenacious is that of circumcision. Both the Jewish and Moslem servants of the cult explain this savage and ancient custom sanctioned both by the Talmud and Koran by purely hygienic considerations. At the same time, they inculcate believers with the thought that a boy who has not received this operation is no longer a Jew or a Moslem and consequently will not be admitted to Paradise. This line of the religionists is sometimes swallowed even by certain Party members. Thus, for example, Communist Party Member Gadamov, employed as a teacher at the Secondary School number 5 of Ashkhabadskiy Rayon, had the rite of circumcision administered to three of his sons.

The direct harm of this custom consists in the fact that it inflicts physical trauma upon children, and is frequently performed in unhygienic circumstances which frequently result in blood poisoning and other disorders that may prove fatal. In addition to this, by holding festive parties in honor of the "Mohammedanization" of their son, the parents deplete their own savings and distract other people from other socially useful endeavors. The newspaper Pravda Yuzhnogo Kazakhstana (The Truth of Southern Kazakhstan) for 1 December, 1957, wrote that one such feast lasted six days.

The belief in the one God Allah in Islam is combined with the veneration of various "saints". In this regard, Islam is not a strictly monotheistic religion. With the emergence and propagation of Islam, its proponents were obliged to take into consideration the faith of people in various gods. The ancient gods were transformed into various "saints". "The veneration of saints", writes the well-known Hungarian Islamic scholar Goldziher, "became a disguise whereby the remnants of conquered religions could survive within the Islamic faith". [see note] [Note: I. Goldziher, The Cult of Saints in Islam, page 65, Moscow, 1938.]

It is not by accident that the Moslem theologians have endowed Allah with 99 beautiful names (with the hundredth supposedly kept a secret from the common believers) in honor of the 100 major tribal gods of the ancient Arabs. In addition to this, there was a need to reckon with the army of "saints" in the Judaic and Christian religions. Finally, the Moslems accumulated many of their own "saints"--prophets, members of the feudal nobility, clergymen, etc; services in worship of the souls of these "saints" are conducted in front of their sarcophagi (mazars).

Survivals of the cult of "saints", closely bound up with ancestor worship in general, along with the veneration of "holy places", are extremely tenacious. This is explained, in addition to other reasons, above all by the fact that not every Moslem can undertake his pilgrimage to Mecca. The mazars and "holy" places are "substitutes" for Mecca.

In addition to fulfilling the Moslem responsibility, believers seek solace in everyday hardship by appealing with numerous requests to the souls of the "saints" at the mazars, begging to receive their protection, healing from disease, etc.

Thus, for example, up until recently believing Karakalpaks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen undertook mass pilgrimages to the mazar of Ysmamut-Ata, which is located near the "Kommuna" collective farm in the Tashauzskaya Oblast of the Takhtinskiy Rayon. Little bits of cloth sewn on large white sheets serve as mute testimony of the effects of religious opium. Each bit of cloth represents an "appeal" by a believer to the soul of a "saint". Even after the closing of the mazar, we had occasion to witness the "healing treatment" of people by the walls of this mediaeval structure.

The final report issued by the 16th Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan noted the fact that a certain portion of the population in the Tashauzskaya Oblast was still visiting "holy places"; among the pilgrims were even Communists and Komsomol members.

Similar examples were provided at the 6th Republican Teachers' Congress. Thus, for example, on 29 June, 1960, a teacher in a school at the Kolkhoz imeni Dianov of the Kizyl-Arbatskiy Rayon in the Turkmen SSR by the name of Yellyyev Annamurad undertook a pilgrimage to the "Ak-Ishan" tomb. He was accompanied by nine children of school and pre-school age.

In Uzbekistan, a particular aura of "holiness" has been bestowed by the clergy on such places as the mazar of the "holiest of the holy" Ishmael Samani, as well as the mazar of Sayfitdin Bokharzi (once considered the sheikh of the entire world), Khodzha Akhrar (famous in his day for permitting the burning of the observatory built by the great Uzbek scholar Ulugbek), the medrese "Miri Arab", the mazar of Hodzha Ismat, and numerous similar "ersatz" Meccas [see note]. [Note: see the newspaper Sovetskaya Bukhara (Soviet Bukhara), 3 April, 1959.]

In the vicinity of the town of Osh in Kirgiziya, pilgrims still visit the "holy" Mount Suleyman, which over 500 years ago was the residence of Sultan Ilik Mazi Suleyman-sheikh.

The great harm resulting from ancestor worship and the veneration of "holy" mazars consists not only in the fact that they inflict a great material loss upon believers themselves and the state at large, but also in that they inculcate the minds of men with faith in the existence of a life after death and the illusory fulfillment of requests; these practices strengthen superstition and fanaticism. In addition to this, such places usually provide refuge for numerous representatives of the cult, including various "holy fools", "saintly people", faith healers, and chisellers, who shamelessly cheat the believers promising interception before the "saints" in return for which they demand a "zakyat", i.e., a tax on behalf of the "poor".

No less harm to our workers and our society is done by such religious holidays of Islam as Uraza-bayram and kurban-bayram. Uraza-bayram is observed during the so-called "holy" month of Ramadan. Moslem theologians convey to the believers the false thought that it was during this month that Allah entrusted Mohammed with the "sacred" book Koran, in honor of which they should observe a 30-day fast (uraza) and a 3-day holiday (bayram). Failure to observe this holiday is considered the greatest crime before God. The cruelty of this fast consists in the fact that over a period of 30 days, the believer must maintain a completely exhausting fast lasting from sunup to sundown; he is not allowed to eat, drink, bathe, or to take medicine in case of illness. It is suggested that he must "abate his passions" and cast his eyes upon Allah through an assiduous reading of

Koran, strict observance of all ceremonies, etc.

It is not difficult to see the social significance of the uraza. Labor productivity falls off sharply during the fast days. In addition to this, during the fast and holiday, the Moslem clergy greatly intensifies its activity, entangling the minds of believers in a maze of mysticism and superstition.

The kurban-bayram holiday (in Arabic, the word "kurban" means "sacrificial victim") represents a remnant of ancient religion borrowed by Islam. This holiday inflicts enormous material losses on both believers and the state. During the holiday, there is a mass slaughter of cattle. If a believer does not offer up a sacrifice, he will not be admitted to Paradise according to the mullahs. During the days of kurban-bayram, pilgrimages are undertaken to "holy places" and mazars, and particularly emphasis is placed on the exact fulfillment of all religious obligations. Evidence of the vitality of this holiday is provided in the following case. "On the first day of kurban-bayram in 1958", writes N. Kuliyeu, "the offering up of the special prayer called ayt-namaza at the tomb of "Mazari-Sherif" near the town of Chardzhou drew about 600 persons. In 1959, the number of pilgrims present at the mazar increased to over twice the previous figure" [see note]. [Note: see N. Kuliyeu, The Anti-Scientific Activities of Islam, page 154, Ashkhabad, 1960.]

No less harmful is the use by believers of the services of various faith healers (tabibs), who under the guise of "folk medicine" do not treat, but rather maim their patients. The director of the Baylinsk Secondary School number 2 (Tatar Autonomous SSR) Z. Akhmerov cites the following case. A nervously ill child by the name of M. was enrolled in the school. He was receiving D marks in eight of his subjects. A diagnosis was made of M's illness. Instead of allowing him to be treated by competent physicians, his parents took him to a faith healer in the Tuymazinskiy Rayon of the Bashkir Autonomous SSR. This witch, forbidding the child to take medicine, forced him to observe a 30-day fast. The outcome of this was unfortunate indeed--now the boy is unable to attend school at all [see note]. [Note: see the magazine Kommunist Tatarii (The Tatar Communist), No 8, 1959.]

Quite recently, the newspaper Pravda Vostoka (The Truth of the East) told of the following case. In payment for "curing" her of paralysis, a middle-aged collective farm woman from the Agricultural Team imeni Thaelmann sent her 22-year-old daughter to a 60-year-old mullah at the mosque of "Khozhda Uban" by the name of Mukhamed Makhmudov! "According to the shariat, the mullah could not refuse the

gift and the young girl became the fifth wife of the lecherous old man..." The responsible workers of the Shafrikanskiy Rayon of the Uzbek SSR "could not find time" to concern themselves with the activities of this tabib. /see note/. /Note: see the article "When Atheists Keep Silent", in Pravda Vostoka, 8 June, 1960./

Further evidence of the feudal attitude toward women may be found in the following case. On 12 June, 1960, schoolgirl Bibi Khidyrova was kidnapped in broad daylight. When she did not appear at school, it turned out that she had been captured by a worker in the sovkhos "Talimardzhan" by the name of Esen Dzhumayev, who promptly "married her off" to his son Yaradan, deputy secretary of the Komsomol organization. On 16 June, he threw a huge feast attended by the Farm Director Orazov, Deputy Secretary of the Party Organization Kadyr Bakhtybayev, school principal Terdayev, chairman of the village Soviet Tal'vanov, and the Director of the trade union organization Babayev--in other words, by the entire active core at the sovkhos. To mislead authorities, a special document was forged which gave the bride's year of birth as 1942 instead of 1946 /see note/. /Note: the newspaper Turkmenskaya Iskra (The Turkmen Spark), 23 August 1960./

The examples of Islamic survivals cited here indicate that the latter continue to exert their influence not only as a result of the particular tenacity of religious tradition or the relative independence of ideas, but largely because certain workers on the ideological front, directors of enterprises, sovkhoses, kolkhozes, and various agencies sometimes reconcile themselves to such facts and display a criminal apathy toward people which is immediately exploited by the proponents of Islam.

* * *

Thus, Islamic survivals represent a serious obstacle to the building of Communism. There can be no reconciliation, no unity, and no "peaceful co-existence" between science and religion and the religious and true scientific world views.

The struggle against religion was considered by V.I. Lenin to be one of the ABCs of Marxism. He devoted special attention to the discovery and definition of those concrete reasons, that fertile soil which gave birth to religion and upon whose juices it feeds.

Unfortunately, some workers on the ideological front called to assume frontline positions in the struggle against religious, including Islamic ideology, have forgotten about these fundamental axioms of Marxism-Leninism and violate the

Party policy in religious matters. In this connection, one observes two extremes. Some workers, underestimating the social evil of religious beliefs come to terms with them and fail to organize appropriate scientific-atheistic programs for the people, naively thinking that religious survivals will die off by themselves in the course of time without any struggle. Other comrades, on the contrary, are attempting to do away with religious survivals in the bat of an eyelash by declaring "war on religion" and displaying excessive administrative zeal.

In questions of the struggle against religious ideologies, the Party has always spoken out against such extremes.

"A Marxist", wrote V.I. Lenin, "must be able to take into account the entire set of concrete conditions and to find the line of demarcation between anarchy and opportunism (this line is relative, fluid, changeable, but ever present), without falling prey to abstract, verbal, and in reality empty "revolutionism" of an anarchist, nor to the middle class spirit and opportunism of the petty bourgeois or liberal intellectual, both of whom are afraid of fighting religion, forget about their tasks, reconcile themselves with faith in God, and are guided not by the interests of the class struggle, but rather by the petty, miserable precept of not hurting, alienating, or frightening anyone, and the sage rule of "live and let live", etc. etc." /See note/. /Note: V.I. Lenin, On Religion, page 23./

Under modern conditions, when the servants of the cult, including the Islamic clergy, are in large measure assuming positions loyal to the Soviet regime, the struggle against religious prejudices must be looked upon as an ideological struggle of a scientific-materialistic world view against the anti-scientific religious concepts of nature and society.

The Party and the Soviet Government are taking all necessary measures to assist believers in their emancipation from the religious narcosis. "The Party has always demanded and will continue to demand a sensitive and attentive attitude toward these believers...A thorough, patient and well-organized scientific-atheistic propaganda program among believers will assist them in finally liberating themselves from religious errors", reads the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU dated 10 November, 1954. /See note/. This is a clear statement of the supremely humane character of the Communist ideology. Facts prove that religiosity is greatly curtailed in those areas where there is a varied, interesting, and thorough program of scientific-atheistic propaganda among the population. /Note: Sputnik Ateista (The Atheists' Companion), page 476, Moscow, 1959./

Successful realization of the decisions adopted by the 21st Party Congress, as was clearly demonstrated by the July (1960) Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, provides a firm foundation for the fulfillment of the Seven-Year Plan, based on the most rational premises, ahead of schedule. With the advent of Communism, there will no longer remain any reasons for the existence of religious beliefs so that men will free themselves from religious prejudices and superstitions. Such is the relentless march of events in our epoch.